

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2019**

Mayor Ziegler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present:**

**Mayor:** R. Ziegler  
**Deputy Mayor:** P. Beagle  
**Councilmembers:** P. Behrmann  
K. Gottschall  
T. Gronlund-Fox(Exc)  
T. Rzeznik  
R. Smiley

**AGENDA CHANGES:** (None)

**MINUTES:**

**CM-11-185-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Rzeznik and Smiley to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of November 12, 2019.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**1.) Notice of Hearing for the Electric Customers of DTE Electric Company  
Case No. U-20527**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Kevin Hinkley, 321 Dorchester in Howell and Wixom business owner, said he wanted to speak regarding New Business #6, the Professional Services Agreement with Hanka Advisor, LLC for Grant Writing and Lobbying Services on the Prospective Beck Road Widening Project. He thought this was a great opportunity for the City. This is the start of many things to come. Mr. Hanka worked diligently on the "Light the Mound Road Project" in Sterling Heights. He worked successfully with two cities and Macomb County and he garnered \$97 million in federal funds for that project. He worked with the Department of Transportation and he prepared the Mound Road application that worked within the goals of the DOT to get that grant. He said he assembled an active group of local stakeholders and got them to go to Washington, DC to lobby for this project. Mr. Hinkley would like to see the Council approve this item and he hoped it would kick-start this project.

**CITY MANAGER REPORTS:**

**1.) Departmental Reports - October 2019**

Deputy Mayor Beagle asked the year-to-date total for the Adopt-A-Boxes. Mr. Sikma said it was approximately 115-120. Deputy Mayor Beagle asked if we ever had a situation where we had to turn a resident away because all of the boxes were in use. Mr. Sikma replied yes. Deputy Mayor Beagle suggested he add a couple more of those boxes in the next budget.

Also, Deputy Mayor Beagle noticed that they are framing a house in Stonegate and he didn't remember seeing any approval of the designs. Mr. Avantini said they were attempting to beat the snowfall. He told them they could put up their models conditioned upon them getting approval for those items we still had outstanding. He thought the materials really weren't affected by the style of the buildings they were going to put up for their models. They are waiting for the City to give them the okay on the revisions that we have made them make. Deputy Mayor Beagle didn't understand how they could put a frame up if they didn't have approval. What if we say no? Mr. Avantini said it was his understanding based on the meeting that it wasn't that the Council was against the buildings they were putting up, but with the design of the buildings and the materials. That wouldn't change the framing of the buildings. Deputy Mayor Beagle felt they were jumping the gun a little bit and forcing our hand. If they put something up and we don't like the design, would they be required to change it? Mr. Avantini said that they will still have to change the designs on the building. It was materials and styles of the buildings and those are interchangeable depending on the models. We agreed that some of them looked good and some of them did not. They can put the designs that we liked and continue working on the other ones. He was hoping we could bring this to a resolution. He thought we've gotten much closer to where the building designs need to be. We pushed real hard and finally got them to include windows on the garage doors. There were different types of siding and bricks they were using and he thinks we have gotten quite a bit of improvement on the designs. We want to iron this out soon so they can continue moving forward.

Councilmember Rzeknik wondered about West Road patching. Mr. Sikma replied that Phase 1 was completed for the year. We opened West Road today. You can drive both ways until the spring, when we will switch the one way going toward Wixom Road. Councilmember Rzeknik clarified that the DPW will make a second pass on the leaf collection. Mr. Sikma stated that they are making every effort to do a second pass through the subdivisions. If folks are worried, they can bag their leaves. We will extend the yard waste bag pickup through the first two weeks of December.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CM-11-186-19:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Rzeknik and Smiley to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Recommendation to Accept a Permanent Water Main Easement Granted by Wixom Development Company for Property Located at 28702 Wall Street for One Dollar (\$1.00)

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** (None)

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Award a Three (3) Year Summer Concert Series Agreement for 2020, 2021 and 2022 to JAG Entertainment of Wixom, Michigan in an Annual Amount of \$24,000 and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement on Behalf of the City**

**CM-11-187-19:** Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Beagle and Councilmember Smiley to award a three (3) year Summer Concert Series Agreement for 2020, 2021 and 2022 to JAG Entertainment of Wixom, Michigan, in an annual amount of \$24,000 and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement on behalf of the City.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

Mayor Ziegler commented that they have done a great job in the past and he was looking forward to it.

**2.) Recommendation to Approve the Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2019 Subrecipient Agreement between Oakland County and the City of Wixom and Authorize Mayor Richard Ziegler to Sign the Agreement on Behalf of the City**

**CM-11-188-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmember Smiley and Deputy Mayor Beagle to approve the Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2019 Subrecipient Agreement between Oakland County and the City of Wixom and authorize Mayor Richard Ziegler to sign the agreement on behalf of the City.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**3.) Recommendation to Utilize a Bid Process from the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) ValuePoint Premium Savings Package and Authorize the Purchase of Ten (10) Replacement Desktop Computers for the Police Department from Hewlett Packard of Palo Alto, California for \$6,600 with the Purchase Budgeted in Account Number 411-301-975.370**

**CM-11-189-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Rzeznik and Smiley to utilize a bid process from the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) ValuePoint Premium Savings Package and authorize the purchase of ten (10) replacement desktop computers for the Police Department from Hewlett Packard of Palo Alto, California for \$6,600.00 with the purchase budgeted in Account Number 411-301-975.370.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**4.) Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Pursue the Sale of Surplus City Property at 3073 and 3084 Partridge in Accordance with Section 3.16.050 (Sale of Economic Development Property) of the Code of Ordinances**

**CM-11-190-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmember Gottschall and Deputy Mayor Beagle to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to pursue the sale of surplus City property at 3073 and 3084 Partridge in accordance with Chapter 3.16.050 (Sale of Economic Development Property) of the Code of Ordinances.

Mr. Brown explained that the City was approached by a Wixom resident who wanted to purchase these two parcels. This went back a few years ago with a prior City Manager. There was an issue at the time that prevented it from being completed. Recently, he re-approached the City about his interest in potentially purchasing these properties. The purpose of this action was to allow us to engage in the rest of the process, which includes a public hearing. The two properties are on the paper street known as Partridge. Ordinance requires the Council's authorization to name an agent on behalf of the City to proceed with negotiations leading up to a possible sale, conduct a public hearing for the sale and then acting on any sales contract. He indicated that a map and a resolution were attached to the report to show the properties.

Mayor Ziegler clarified that if this was approved, City Manager Brown would be able to negotiate with this party. Mr. Brown said there would be a public hearing on it with the advertisement. Depending on the outcome, he would negotiate with this party or any other party that was interested. Mayor Ziegler asked if these properties were adjacent to this person's house and Mr. Brown indicated that was correct.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if we have already discussed pricing with him. He knew the one was only \$1,000 maximum because it was a tax foreclosure. Mr. Brown replied yes. The second would be much like the first.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**5.) Recommendation to Approve a Professional Services Agreement with CIB Planning of Fenton, Michigan for Redevelopment Ready Communities Technical Assistance Services for a Total Not to Exceed \$10,000, with the Purchase Budgeted in Account Number 101-721-956.481, and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement**

**CM-11-191-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmember Rzeznik and Deputy Beagle to approve a professional services agreement with CIB Planning of Fenton, Michigan for Redevelopment Ready Communities Technical Assistance services for a total not to exceed \$10,000, with the purchase budgeted in Account Number 101-721-956.481, and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Councilmember Rzeznik recalled that without being certified we were excluded from certain grants. Mr. Avantini confirmed that was correct. He said that you either had to be certified or in the process of becoming certified in order to receive funds for redevelopment purposes. Councilmember Rzeznik asked when they would be receiving the certification. Mr. Avantini hoped for next year.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**6.) Recommendation to Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Hanka Advisor, LLC of Bowie, Maryland Proposal for Grant Writing and Lobbying Services on the Prospective Beck Road Widening Project for a Total Not to Exceed \$28,500, Approve the Associated Budget Amendment for Account Number 101-441-801.391 and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement**

**CM-11-192-19:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gottschall and Rzeznik to approve a professional services agreement with Hanka Advisor, LLC of Bowie, Maryland for grant writing and lobbying services on the prospective Beck Road widening project for a total cost not to exceed \$28,500, approve the associated budget amendment for Account Number 101-441-801.391 and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Councilmember Rzeznik indicated that he was part of an initiative on a road project in Sterling Heights and witnessed the value in having a contact in Washington working on their behalf. He was in favor of this as he felt Beck Road was one of the main corridors to the City's economic development. He understood that it took many years for a project like this to be completed but knew that you needed to start somewhere.

Mayor Ziegler thought that Mr. Hanka had represented the City well in the past and believed that he knew his way around Washington. He was in full support of this.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Vanessa Willett and John Smith of the DDA Board indicated that the DDA Board had been looking into the Hopkins Barn and house and the potential uses of those buildings. She mentioned that the Board's main focus was to renovate the barn. She and Mr. Smith were new to the Board but they wanted to express the momentum they had for making the City better. She was aware that the DDA Board was an extension of the City. Mr. Smith indicated that part of the Board's initiative was to gauge the public's interest in this property so they used social media and learned that people thought the barn would be a great place to host weddings, showers, various events and activities. The Board felt having a barn in downtown was not common and would be unique to Wixom. He stated this barn could attract people to the downtown area and become a great thing for the businesses.

Mayor Ziegler was happy to see members of the DDA come to the Council meeting. He recalled a lot of discussions over the years regarding that property. He was aware that the Historical Society was interested in both buildings and invested a lot of money and time but it became a project that they could not make any headway on. He recalled a time when City Council held discussions about making the barn a wedding venue but thought the general consensus was that they were not in the business of having weddings other than trying to offset some of the costs at the Community Center. After attending the DDA meetings, he saw the enthusiasm for the barn but did not want to see them going down the same road as many have before, then suddenly pull the rug out from underneath them. He was aware of a recent meeting where the Parks and Recreation Commission mentioned tearing the

house down and moving the barn to the Gibson House property. He thought the process of the demo and moving the home was costly. He was curious as to how the other members of Council felt about the barn and/or house.

Councilmember Rzeznik wondered if there would be elements of grants for historic preservation once we were certified through a Redevelopment Ready Community since the barn was within the VCA and downtown district. Mr. Avantini said that was one possibility. There are other funding sources because it was a historic structure. We can also look at ways to privatize, not necessarily the ownership, but the rehab and the operation. There are a number of private entrepreneurs that look for these types of structures. The fact that this barn was located so close to the kitchen facilities at the Community Center was a plus. That was one of the things that could add to the use and interest of the barn. He thought there was potential, but he also knew that City government was set up to run a business like that. He thought the key was getting the private sector to do it instead of the government.

Mayor Ziegler said he threw out the idea of the City selling the property to the DDA for \$1 and let them make the decision. This has been around for a long time and there have been false starts before. The City would like to have it off our radar.

Councilmember Behrmann commented that the siding was falling off the house. He wondered what it would cost to have someone put a board up so creatures weren't getting in. With regards to the barn, he said he has been to a lot of meetings over the years where there was discussion about the benefits of the barn and what could be done with it. At the last Council meeting, we discussed what the \$36,000 for the Civic Center Improvements be used for (of the CDBG money). He wondered if that money could be put into the barn instead of the walking path. Mr. Avantini said he wasn't sure if it was an either or. He thought there were ways to finance and fund that project regardless of what other things were going on. Councilmember Behrmann thought keeping the barn was a benefit to the community. He didn't know if it mattered if it was owned by the City or the DDA. Mr. Avantini thought it might help by putting it in the hands of the DDA. He knew that the State has a Go-Fund-Me project where they will kick in \$25,000 if we raise \$25,000. He thought we needed to talk to other people who have developed and operated these in the past to find out what they know.

Councilmember Smiley said he has not been a fan of the barn from what he has heard in the past. It was the expense and the approach. By listening to Mr. Avantini talk about privatization and grants, it drew him back into the idea. He was the one in the past to say that the City shouldn't be in the wedding business. However, something needs to be done with the house and the barn. He wasn't sure what could be done to save the house, but he would be willing to listen to ideas about what Mr. Avantini was saying.

Mr. Avantini commented that recently we had a meeting to discuss Tax Increment Financing. He felt that the DDA Board was a pretty energetic group. When you combine that with research and looking at all the different options, he was encouraged we could do some pretty cool things.

Councilmember Gottschall said he would be in favor of seeing a motion at some point in the future to tear the house down. It is an eyesore to him and he didn't see a great potential use for it at any City expense. To clear up the eyesore for \$10,000 was more worth it. We can then focus on the barn if we wanted to. He didn't want to see any taxpayer funds used for renovating or operating it. That was where privatization would come in as he thought this was rental-related. He said that it could become a discussion point with a vendor for doing bookings at the Community Center as well. As for maintenance in the future, he suggested that a trust be established where donors pay into it. He indicated that he did not want to see taxpayer funds be put toward a barn that was being used for weddings and events. He noted there were ways to get the renovations without using taxpayer dollars. He stated that if there were taxpayer funds being used for the barn, he would vote no every time.

Deputy Mayor Beagle was interested in looking into this further. He liked the idea of looking into any grants that would be available. He asked if the Fire Department could use the house for training because it may be cheaper. Mr. Smith said it would be possible but it would have to be cleared of any asbestos and/or other issues.

Mayor Ziegler mentioned the City had gotten away from live burn trainings because of issues such as asbestos.

Councilmember Rzeznik thought there were plenty of barns within Oakland County that were being used by the public and private sector. He thought there must have been some studies performed that they could obtain information. Mr. Avantini said that there were a lot of examples in Oakland County and surrounding counties for barn operations. He thought we could learn a lot from them. We have to be creative in finding ways to rehabilitate and get the barn to the point it is suitable and meets all the codes. It is also important to figure out how to finance this project using alternate mechanisms. We may have other financing tools in the future that will allow us to do things that do not require money from the General Fund. With a little time, he was sure we would come up with a plan.

Mr. John Smith stated the DDA has been doing homework and due diligence in researching this. They have started to look at construction budgets for the renovation of the project and they have come across farm restoration experts. There are examples across Oakland County where they have different events in the barn, like petting zoos and harvest festivals. He knew there were mixed feelings about weddings in particular, but that was not the only opportunity. He said they saw a wide range of multi-functional use. He thought this could be a viable property and opportunity.

Ms. Willett commented that she does this every day – building, renovation, and restoration. She said she does work for the federal government and does historical restoration and renovation all over the country. She said they have been working on a very large presentation to present to the Council in the near future. She noted that they are all volunteers, they all have businesses and they appreciated the Council's patience. As far as taxpayers' money, she said that she was a taxpayer. Part of what the DDA does and part of their responsibility is to try to keep historic presence in the downtown if at all possible. She said they have looked at options for

the house because that was part of the due diligence. The TIF money goes away if there is no DDA. It was a benefit for the City and the taxpayers of the City. She said she and other members of the DDA were spending a lot of time to present it and give a better recommendation including uses of barns. She thought there was good potential or she wouldn't be wasting her time. To her, a project like this was small in the big scheme of things.

Mayor Ziegler thought there should be some sort of timeframe on this. He was glad to hear a lot of work had been done for the presentation. He would like not to have this sitting there 20 years from now looking the same way.

Russ Meredith, 378 Fletcher, applauded the DDA for what they are trying to do with the barn. He has lived in Wixom for about two and a half years now and one of his first meetings was the one where they discussed the barn. He walked over to the house this morning and there are windows broken all the way around it. His concern was that the broken windows were there with glass hanging at the top. He thought the windows needed to be boarded up as soon as possible.

Mayor Ziegler said he was sitting at the DDA meeting this morning and he could see the DPW guys putting up the Christmas tree. On his way home, he saw more DPW guys picking up the leaves. He said he would like to see the windows boarded up but the DPW guys can't be everywhere. We need to spend the money on things that are necessary right now. He felt time was running short for that house.

Vance McCormick, 2098 Hopkins Drive, stated that he had an insurance repair company for 30 years. One day he got a call to look at a barn so he went down to the Monroe area to look at it. To his surprise, just the beams going across were \$35,000 apiece. This was ten to fifteen years ago. They had to be specially made. One section of the barn was over \$40,000 because if you wanted it the way it was supposed to be, it had to be specially made. He said that if the City was thinking about moving the barn, he thought it would be over \$3 million. If we are going to move it to an area where people can see it, we have to take into consideration that if something gets damaged, it can be quite expensive to make it look exactly like it was. As far as the house goes, Mr. McCormick said there are companies that will buy even the casings. He suggested that we have someone buy as much of the old house as we can and then let the Fire Department use it as training. Most of the companies would have to be responsible. He didn't think the generations after us cared about something like this. It would be nice to have this still in Wixom. He said it was very expensive to do this kind of work.

Mike Smith, 1692 Norton Creek, thanked the Council for supporting the Wixom fire fighters and the Fire Fighters' Union. He thought the contract was a monumental first step for the Fire Department, the fire fighters and the citizens of the City. He looked forward to budget sessions this year and he wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brown indicated that there were four employees celebrating years of service in the month of December. He congratulated and thanked them. Also, we had several comments from residents recently regarding the appreciation for the work the DPW

did during the recent snowstorm. Lastly, he mentioned the Tree Lighting Festival on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, from 5-11 p.m. This year will be bigger and better.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilmember Smiley** welcomed and congratulated those who won the recent election. He welcomed back Councilmember Gronlund-Fox and welcomed the newest Councilmember, Peter Behrmann. He congratulated Councilmember Gottschall and Mayor-Elect Beagle. He thanked the people of Wixom for their support. He was humbled and grateful. He said the Clerk and Deputy Clerk did a great job on the election. He encouraged everyone to attend the Tree Lighting Festival on December 6<sup>th</sup> and he wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

**Councilmember Rzeznik** said there were a lot of DDA topics discussed tonight and he thought that was great. Along with the DDA energy, he mentioned that the Downtown Dazzle was looking great. He saw even more lights up coming home from work. He thought a great job was done in getting businesses to stay involved with that. He asked for an update on where we are with a new DDA Director at the next Council meeting and Mr. Brown said he would have some breaking news soon. Councilmember Rzeznik wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

**Councilmember Gottschall** wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

**Councilmember Behrmann** thought a take-away from this meeting was that the Council, the DDA and the City need to get together to make sure all three are on the same page. We all have the same goal and that is to make this City a better place. Sometimes he thought it felt that the Council was doing one thing, the DDA was doing one thing and the City was doing something else. If we are all on the same page, doing the exact same thing, we will accomplish a lot more. He hoped we could see that happen.

**Deputy Mayor Beagle** thanked the DPW for their diligence in picking up the leaves. He appreciated it and he knew the residents also appreciated their hard work on that. He thanked the four employees who were celebrating their work anniversaries this month. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and he will see everyone at the Tree Lighting Festival.

**Mayor Ziegler** thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. It was always good to have a crowd. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Catherine Buck  
City Clerk

Approved 12-10-2019
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